

The Arian Controversy

209

with *it*. If we cannot all think alike on all topics, we can at least all be united on the great essentials. As far as regards divine Providence, let there be one faith and one understanding, one united opinion in reference to God." And then the letter concludes with the passionate outburst:

" Restore me then my quiet days and untroubled nights, that I may retain my joy in the pure light and, for the rest of my days, enjoy the gladness of a peaceful life. Else I needs must groan and be diffused wholly in tears, and know no comfort of mind till I die. For while the people of (loci, my fellow-servants, are thus torn asunder in unlawful and pernicious controversy, how can I be of tranquil mind ?
"

Some have seen in this letter proof of the Emperor's consummate wisdom, and have described its language as golden and the triumph of common sense. It seems to us a complete exposure of his profound ignorance of the subject in which he had interfered. It was easy to say that the question should not have been raised. ⁴¹ *Qnieta mm nitvvn*" is an excellent motto in theology as in politics, but this was precisely one of those questions which, when once raised, are bound to go forward to an issue. The time was ripe for it* It suited the taste and temper of the age, and the resultant storm of controversy, so easily stirred up, was not easily allayed. For Constantino to tell Alexander and Arius that theirs was merely a verbal quarrel on an insignificant and non-essential point, or that they were really of one and the same mind, and had the same